



Sermon for the 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany, Jan. 16, 2022
The Wedding in Cana of Galilee

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Coeur d'Alene
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[Isaiah 62:1-5](#), [1 Corinthians 12:1-11](#), [John 2:1-11](#), [Psalm 36:5-10](#)

O Lord, our times are in your hands. May the Holy Spirit reveal to us the face of the Christ in each other and in all of creation. Amen.

Welcome to the second Sunday after the Epiphany. There is something about saying, "Epiphany" that makes me happy; makes me want to move to a sunny window and bask in the warmth from that fiery orb now sitting so low on our horizon. Epiphany!

The themes of Epiphany are light, enlightenment, glory, and vision. Epiphany means "revelation." I have often thought of an epiphany as an "ah-ha, why didn't I think of that before?" moment; but the season of Epiphany is much more profound. Epiphany unfolds like the heat shields and mirrors on the James Webb space telescope; slowly, methodically, one event at a time. For Christians, the season of Epiphany is also "Theophany" – the revelation of the incarnate God in the human Jesus, one story at a time.

The visit of the Magi to Bethlehem officially begins the season of Epiphany, but with 20/20 hindsight we know there were previous signs that pointed to Jesus as a more-than-special child. Visitations and revelations by an angel, to Zechariah and then to Mary meant something out-of-the-ordinary was going to happen. When John the Baptizer-to-be leapt in Elizabeth's womb at Mary's greeting, and when angels of the Lord appeared to shepherds and "the glory of the Lord shone around them." Those things just don't happen every day.

Simeon, a righteous and devout man who was inspired by the Holy Spirit to visit the temple in Jerusalem on the very day when [40-day-old] Jesus was 'presented,' and Anna, a prophetess of great age who lived in the temple, both recognized Jesus' Lordship, and spoke of Jesus "to all in Jerusalem who looked for redemption." [Luke 2:25-38]

12 year-old Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem when his parents joined the caravan to return to Nazareth. When Mary and Joseph realized Jesus was missing, they went back to Jerusalem and searched for him for three days. Three days. "They found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers." All revelatory of an uncommon child – but especially, "He went with them back to Nazareth, and was obedient to them." [How many obedient 12 year-old boys do you know?]

What happens in today's Gospel at the wedding in Cana of Galilee is a subtle revelation. In Jesus' time the bridegroom's family threw the wedding party and it went on for a week. We read "...the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding." This dispels an oft told myth that Jesus was the bridegroom at

the wedding, although – based on Mary’s concern about the lack of wine -- they may have been close friends or relatives of the bridegroom.

How embarrassing to run out of wine! Mary said, “Jesus, do something.” I was bothered by Jesus’ response, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me?” until someone who knows about these things told me that saying “woman” to his mother was more like, “Ma’am.” Jesus was not ready to reveal himself, but Mary knew he would be obedient to her, “Yes, ma’am.”

Jesus had no physical contact with the jars or with the water. He told the servants, "Fill the jars with water... draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." With Jesus it was about the results, not about how or by whom the water was changed into wine. I did the math. 120 to 180 gallons equals 50 to 75 cases of superb wine. The celebration was saved. The chief steward didn’t understand why the bridegroom had saved the superior wine until the wedding guests were too drunk to appreciate it, but the servants who poured water into the jars and drew out wine knew what had happened.

This is called the first of Jesus’ ‘signs.’ ‘Signs,’ not ‘miracles.’ There was no sleight of hand, no incantation. Jesus was not a magician. Without calling attention to himself or touching anything, Jesus humbly, “revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.” [Why do you believe in Jesus? What signs have you seen?]

This is what award-winning author Diana Butler Bass wrote about the season of Epiphany; giving us a recap of last week and today, and a prelude to the Gospels for the next several weeks.

“What seems ordinary is revealed as something extraordinary. A baptism turns into a divine announcement; water becomes wine; reading holy words introduces a prophet of the Kingdom; a day’s laborious fishing breaks the nets with a great catch; the poor are blessed; and love, mercy, and forgiveness are offered not to friends but to those who seek to do us harm.”

Where have you realized the glory of the Lord revealed? In dancing snowflakes? In the giggle of a child? In the majesty of mountains; the vastness of oceans or ripples in a muddy puddle? Perhaps it is where dwells Emmanuel, God With Us; in the receptacle of your own heart.

May we always be open to the wonder and the joy revealed to us in the extraordinary and especially in the ordinary of each and every day. May we see it in the face of everyone we meet.

Love God. Love your neighbor. Be amazed. Amen.